

In Response

A Reply to Kent-Udolf's Review of *Behavior Analysis Language Instrument* and Behavior Analysis Language Program

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Regarding Kent-Udolf's Review (1989) of the BALI and the BALP, I appreciate the reviewer's comments but would like to take issue with one point raised in the review, that is, the issue of the development of functional language.

Kent-Udolf suggested that some objectives listed in the BALI are not functional, that is, useful. In substantiating this claim, the reviewer specifies items such as, "name some colors, name some animals" and questions "When would one use such a skill?" My answer, "preschool!" A functional behavior cannot be ascertained simply by an examination of the response topography. One must examine the antecedent and consequent conditions of typical specific environment(s). With young children, school is one of several environments in which they spend a great amount of time. The school environment potentially allows for integration of young handicapped children with their peers. Classroom instruction involving items similar to those delineated above is common in preschools and

kindergartens serving nonhandicapped children. Our intent in providing those types of objectives was to provide some assessment items for teachers who work with handicapped children in preschool and kindergarten settings. To neglect items typical of the school environment would not provide, in my opinion, a comprehensive tool for teachers and parents of young children.

The BALI does not indicate which objectives are to be assessed for specific age ranges. Rather, this decision is left open to the user (e.g., teacher, therapist, and/or parent). Such a decision should be based on the individual client's needs, social environments, and chronological age. We felt this format for the BALI would allow the user more freedom to identify useful skills from a large pool of objectives from each of four language repertoires (manding, tacting, intraverbal, and mand compliance skills). In retrospect, perhaps this is a deficiency of the material (not specifying age ranges/environments for each item of each objective). However, I believe that personnel in the field will find the BALI a useful tool for planning a language curriculum for persons with severe disabilities.

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